

IS WOMAN SUFFRAGE RIGHT?

The Question Answered



BY ISAAC LOCKHART PEEBLES
OF THE MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE

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PREFACE

Woman Suffrage has become quite an engaging subject, but we are convinced that it is being discussed on the wrong bases, and therefore we have brought forth this production for the revelation of that fact, and too, with the hope of setting aright what is destined to be a great evil if not corrected. This is a restless, hurrying age, and hence quick choice of bases and hasty conclusions and rushing actions obtain; but despite it all we should hesitate sufficiently in order to weigh well the question of Woman Suffrage, for it involves all interests of our race.

We hope and pray that this work may prove to be a great help to, if not a perfect settlement of, this whole matter.

ISAAC LOCKHART PEEBLES.

Meridian, Miss., March, 1917.

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IS WOMAN SUFFRAGE RIGHT? THE QUESTION ANSWERED

I

Origin of Woman Suffrage

The origin of the present movement for Woman Suffrage does not date back into the remote past, but near the middle of the nineteenth century. Mrs. John Stuart Mill wrote an article in the Westminster Review in 1851, criticising the Reform Act, or Bill passed by the English Parliament in 1832, which excluded women from voting, although they had the required property qualification necessary to suffrage. *Justitia* wrote a pamphlet on "The Right of Women to the Political Franchise" in 1855. From that kind of a beginning, the agitation of Woman Suffrage has continued in England.

In 1820, Francis Wright, a Scottish reformer, came to America, and in 1828 emphasized woman's rights, aided by Ernestine L. Rose, a brilliant and beautiful Polish woman, who was quite enthusiastic in that cause. Others enlisted, and hence the agitation culminated in a Woman's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, on the 19th and 20th of July, 1848 in response to a call which was published in the Seneca County Courier, July 14th of the same year. In that convention, the religious, social and civil condition and rights of

women were discussed and zeal for Woman's Rights cause intensified. On the agitation has continued until the present, unabated.

II

The Bases Adopted for Woman Suffrage

1. The first to which we invite attention is "Taxation Without Representation." In adopting this basis, women overlooked the fact that their representation is in men, as it has always been when normal, and therefore, if there is a lacking in the same, the remedy is not to be sought in Woman Suffrage, but in the suffrage of men. All of the great reforms of recent years—especially that of prohibition—have not been accomplished by Woman Suffrage as such, but by the suffrage of men, who in their suffrage, represented the women. Let no one forget that there are men who pay taxes that are not allowed to vote, and therefore the plea that "taxation means a right to vote" does not hold good. It is declared that in some states women pay more taxes than men, but those who thus declare do not disclose the fact that men are paying their own taxes in their wives' names, and therefore the remedy in such cases is not to be sought by women in Woman Suffrage, but in persuading their representatives to do business in a more manly way. If the husband is dishonest, let the good wife wield her mighty influence for his conversion to honesty, and not to seek a position that will favor greater

dishonesty on her part, and also the unbecoming thing of bossing and driving her husband.

2. The second basis adopted for Woman Suffrage is "Equality of Women With Men." In some respects men and women may be equal, but they are not in the aggregate, for the reason that men are males and women are females, and too, that men cannot be women and women cannot be men any more than a husband can become equal to his wife in carrying, bearing and nourishing helpless infants. Many a loving, devoted husband would gladly suffer equally with his precious wife the gestation, parturition and care for their sweet babies, but he cannot because he is a man—he is not a woman. On the other hand, there are self-sacrificing wives who would cheerfully relieve their husbands of those struggles and hardships of his life that require masculine equipments to meet, but they cannot because they are women. They are not and cannot be men.

Again, a man may be untrue to his wife and deal unlawfully with other women, but he cannot force on his wife illegal children for whom she has to care; but his wife may be untrue to him and exercise unlawfully with other men and bring forth children that are not his for him to support, under the claim that they are his, and he cannot disprove it, although he may suspect that they are not his children. Even when husband and wife are both true, they cannot be equal despite the most intense desires and the most persistent righteous efforts of each to that end, for while the

husband is attending his farm, merchandise, practicing medicine or law, teaching school, voting, or preaching, his modest, decent wife cannot be seen in public, or she may be in bed with a darling, lawful newcomer to remain awhile, and therefore cannot equal her husband in business activities—cannot even go to the polls with her husband to vote, however anxious she may be to do so, although as healthy as he. Nature just simply and justly will not allow her to be equal to her husband. She may be more intelligent, better educated, better morally, have more property, and yet nature will not allow her to vote, arrest a negro if she is sheriff, hold court if she is judge, nor attend to state business, if governor. Other bases we could show that are false, but we deem it unnecessary.

III

The Proper Bases for Discussing of Woman Suffrage

The basis for a wise and righteous discussion of Woman Suffrage is not that of “taxation without representation,” “equal rights of women with those of men,” “woman’s equality with man,” “what women can do, have done, are doing,” nor “what they prefer to do,” or “what men may think and prefer their doing.” No, not at all; but it is that of her relation to man, and man’s relation to her. In order, therefore, to a correct discussion of Woman Suffrage we should settle the question of woman’s relationship to man and man’s re-

lationship to woman, and therefore let us perform that task, remembering that God's word is the only authority for its settlement.

Matrimony illustrates this point most clearly for when a couple marries the woman's name is lost in that of her husband, and therefore she is no longer known by her former name, which in reality was her father's name. Her father was her representative prior to her marriage and since marriage her husband is her representative. This fact finds proof in the following Scriptures: "If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth; And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand. But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand. And if she had at all an husband, when she vowed, or uttered aught out of her lips, wherewith she bound her soul; And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard it; then her vows shall stand, and her bonds wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. But if her husband disallow her on the day that he heard it; then he shall make her vow which she vowed, and that which she uttered with her lips, wherewith she bound her soul, of none effect." (Numbers 30:3-8.) If the father or husband consents to her vows, then he is

responsible for vows as the father for his daughter's debts and the husband for his wife's debts now.

God's word informs us that woman is subject to man and that man is woman's ruler and head. That woman's relation to man is subjection is unmistakable from God's own language to her after her most wilful sin against God. "Unto the woman he said: I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception: in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Genesis 3:16.) Paul wrote: "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." (Col. 3:19.) The word "submit" is "sub" under and "mittere" to send, literally meaning to place or send under. God does not say one thing about husbands submitting to their wives, or to place themselves, or send themselves under their wives, but plainly declares that his relation to his wife is that of headship. That fact is plainly declared when Paul wrote: "And the head of the woman is the man," (I. Cor. 11:3); and again: "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:23). He wrote also that "the head of every man is Christ" (I. Cor. 11:3). Now, the whole matter is before us and it is this: that Christ is the head of every man and that the man is the head of the woman, and too, that women are subject to Christ and to men, and men to Christ. With very little effort one can see that Christ could not be the head of

men, if they were heads of him, or even his equals, and therefore cannot any one with a very small degree of knowledge and understanding see that man cannot be woman's head if she is his head, or even his equal? God's order would be wrecked, for his order is, Christ the head of man and man the head of woman. Any one should see, that unless specially limited, woman suffrage means a right to be elected, and a right to be elected means to be the head. In plainer words, if a woman is elected governor of a state, she becomes the head of all the men in that commonwealth, and if she is elected president of the United States, she becomes the head of all the men who are citizens of the United States and even head of her husband, and thereby changes God's order completely which has fixed man for the headship of the woman, and an order too that God alone can change rightly, and therefore since He has not changed it by placing woman in the headship, it should not be changed by men nor women. Let it not be changed for God's sake.

IV

Unanswerable Objections to Woman Suffrage

1. The first objection to Woman Suffrage is, that it will rob women of that preferable lady-like modesty and delicacy that places them in a higher esteem with men than that that men have for men. Nothing does a man appreciate more in womanhood than a normal, delicate modesty pecu-

liar to women, whether he himself knows much or little, or is a Christian or a sinner; but when that has been displaced by the masculinities of men, then women will become repulsive and disgusting. When she assumes an air of don't care and to dare, she forfeits that high regard true men have for normal womanhood.

2. The second objection to Woman Suffrage is, that it hurts women and drives them to desperate acts. In England enthusiasts for Woman Suffrage destroyed property irrespective of its value, and neither did they care for the discomfort and suffering it entailed. In this great country of ours, woman suffragists not only have said and done hard things, but they have done the very ungodly thing of mutilating the Bible, and fixed up a Bible of their own, and titled it, "The Woman's Bible," (I have a copy of it on my table before me), but how uncharitable it is in them to leave men with no Bible at all—it is "The Woman's Bible!" Men have not been so unkind to women, for the men have always regarded the Bible as the Book of God for men and women, but look how women suffragists have done: patched up a kind of Bible that suits them and left men without a Bible. Just think how they recently lost their lady-like modesty and dared to browbeat the intelligent, courteous, honorable and good President, Woodrow Wilson. To accomplish the end sought, they endured cold and rain, and even the smiles and courtesies of our great President. What a hard heart that refuses to respond to

manly smiles and to the blandest courtesies! They neglect husbands, children, parents, home and squander money.

3. The third objection against Woman Suffrage is, it will deprive women of that supreme protection by men that they have without suffrage. Men regard men grossly cowardly and unmanly when they wilfully fail to respond to woman's needs and protection, for true manhood esteems it honorable and chivalrous to do so. A manly man will not hesitate to shed his blood for a true woman. He will sacrifice for women in preference to men. Men have enacted laws partial to women; such as their husbands supporting them, and should they leave them without support and the mothers of their wives furnish them, they become liable to same for it. If a husband leaves his wife and dependent children he is required to support them, but if his wife leaves him and helpless children, she is not responsible for any part of their support. Should a wife be divorced from her husband because he is an adulterer and he is an active business man with no children, one-third of his estate may be granted her whether he likes it or not, as alimony, but if a husband divorces his wife because she is an adulteress, she does not become liable to him for anything, although she may be ever so rich and he miserably poor. Women are not required and neither can they be compelled to work roads, to be grand jurors, to arrest criminals, to go to war, and yet men may be compelled to all of these and others not men-

tioned. Many other advantages that women have over men by men that are not mentioned, but those mentioned are sufficient for one to see that after all that has been said and written to the contrary, woman's heritage is a goodly one, and therefore, can women afford to ruin it all? Surely not, and especially in the Solid South? Wives, mothers and daughters, please to allow me to persuade you to let well enough alone and do not lose what you already have that is dear.

4. The fourth objection to Woman Suffrage is, that it means destruction of homes. The word home in the real sense that is now a synonym for heaven, will become a synonym for a veritable earthly hell, or no place at all. The wife, if found at home at all, will likely have some testing struggle she had, some insult offered her, some achievement she made, or some defeat she met, to narrate or inaugurate a sharp, exciting debate with her husband on some political issue, the progress or result of an election, etc., thereby affording him no mental rest nor spiritual comfort, nor taking any herself. Her excitement is great and intense. Her husband may not find her at home at all, because in their race for governor she defeated him, and hence may be out looking after the state farm for criminals, or some other interest of the State; or she may have defeated him for mayor of their city, and hence she is holding a very important city council, consisting perhaps wholly of men, and will not likely reach home till midnight, if then; or she may have defeated her husband for

sheriff, and is out spurring a horse, hurrying blood-hounds and brandishing a deadly weapon with murder rankling in her blood in pursuit of an escaping criminal; or she may be a judge and is off holding courts and will not return for several weeks; or she may be a turnkey and it is very necessary for her to remain in jail for the safe-keeping of some desperate white men and negroes who are not allowed bond, or have been sentenced to the gallows, or lifetime imprisonment, or both; or she may have been sent to jail, or lifetime imprisonment, or sentenced to be hung by the neck till dead, because she shot to death an opponent of Woman Suffrage in a debate over the same; or she may be in a very close race for re-election, and since some white and colored voters cannot be seen only at night, and therefore she must see as many as possible, even if it requires a late night hour, for her ambition for re-election impels her to a desperate effort to accomplish it, home or no home, husband or no husband, children or no children, for to her it is preferable. If woman suffrage obtains and the women live it as it now means, they will be in competitorship with men of all grades and classes, and of course they will have very little time if any at all for a home, and if at home and the husband wishes to hold family prayer, she may inform him that she is as much the head of the family as he, and therefore if it is held at all she will hold it; or she may not believe in it at all, and hence assert her equal headship to see that it is not held; or her husband may not

believe in it and she does, and therefore feeling herself equal in every particular with him, she dares to hold it anyhow, even against his protests, and therefore, since there is no agreement, he asserts his part of the headship and a conflict follows, and therefore the point of difference will be settled in the favor of the better man in the struggle. It may cost the life of one or both. Woman suffrage makes a monstrosity with two heads, and as a rule monstrosities do not live long, and hence the home ceases.

5. The fifth objection to Woman Suffrage is, it disregards God's order and ignores nature. Any one can see at a glance that the wife of our President is not equal to him in the presidency of this great country and connot be, for she is not President although she may be as competent as he, and why is she not the President? Because the powers that elect presidents did not elect her and they do not want her to assume that she is and even try to rule her husband. This government cannot and will not have two persons as rulers, for the reason that they may differ and tie up everything or ruin everything, and so we have one head. That is God's order, but Woman Suffrage wants two heads, and when we say two, we refer to the home to prove it. God's order is one husband and one head, as we have already noticed, or, in other words, God has placed one ruler in the home for order's sake and especially for his glory, and that ruler is the husband, but Woman Suffrage wants his wife to be as much a ruler as he,

if not the chief ruler, and therefore cannot any one see and know that they will differ, and hence if one has as much right to rule as the other, the home will be ruined? The husband says, "Wife, please to take care of our babies to-day, for I shall have to look after some interests and will have to be gone all day." But she, assuming that she is as much a ruler as he, if not the chief ruler, declares that he must stay at home himself for she must go and look after woman suffrage, business or no business, children or no children; or he may be solicited to run for an office and woman suffragists may solicit his wife to run, too, and of course she being very bright and ambitious yields to their solicitations and so does her husband, and he so informs her, but to his surprise she informs him that she has been solicited also to run for the same office and that she has decided to make the run, and that he must stay at home and cook, nurse the baby and keep it and its clothes clean, and if the baby cries, stop it if he can, and if he cannot just let it cry, for it will not kill it; but the husband informs her that the office needs a man to fill it and he feels that his chances are good for an election, etc., but she informs him that she has as much right to be elected as he, and therefore he need not say anything more about it, for she has fully decided to run, and now what? If they stop to quarrel and fight to decide real headship their home is spoiled, and if they both enter the race their home is hurt, and if she is elected the duties

of the office may require all of her time, and hence her home is neglected and God's order disregarded and she assumes headship. Let it be remembered that God made man the head of the woman, not only in the home, but in the church and the State, and that His order should not be disregarded; and to disregard, or try to change it, is an insult to Him. Woman Suffrage ignores nature that says to women, "Your very nature is against Woman's Suffrage as it is now advocated for headship, or equality with man, but it favors men for leadership and headship." They were made for either, but women were not; for one elected president of our great Nation, or governor of our great State, might be confined or have an infant too young yet right on inauguration day, and therefore the news flashes all over the world that our president or governor is very healthy, but nature has rule now and says, she cannot and she shall not be there. God made her so she cannot be there at that period. Her husband, father and brothers express great mortification and her husband says: "Wife, had I been elected, nature would have favored my being there, but you see now how it is with us." If she has any true convictions left, she will likely ask the pardon of her husband, father and brothers, confessing at the same time that when soliciting votes of all kinds of voters, good, bad, white and black, that she did not feel right, neither did she feel comfortable through the whole campaign—she felt out of place; besides confesses that she was so impelled on by woman suffrage enthusiasm, that

she grew unreasonable and nothing but a demonstration of the kind she is now having would have ever enabled her to see such a difference between men and women, and too, that they cannot be equal and cannot do equally, and now, husband, father and brothers, if God and you all will forgive me, from now on I shall let you men who were made for leadership and headship have them and I shall help you all to be good and efficient ones. Husband, if you will forgive me, from now forth, I shall remain in our home and care for, instruct and train our sweet children the best I can; seeing that they attend Sunday School and church regularly as they are able, and help you all I can to be a good husband, father, church member and citizen, and should our country need you in any capacity, I shall do my very best to help you to meet fully every requirement. You can be the sheriff, governor, president, or fill any office for which you may be wanted. You have borne so well with my immodesties and discourtesies, my harsh speech and rough conduct. My heart has been growing so hard that I cared less and less for God and men only as I could have my own way. I could hardly see any good in men or women only as they suited me on Woman Suffrage. I even had a growing contempt for them when they did not do just exactly to suit me. I even advocated boycotting those I could not convince and those who opposed Woman Suffrage. For all of this I heartily repent, praying to our Holy Father to forgive me, for he has been so good to us women.

After all, you men have been good to us and allowed us to say, misrepresent and do many things we should have been ashamed of, but were so blinded and deafened by Woman Suffrage that we could not see or hear. I do not know what we women meant anyhow. We spent the hard-earned money you men made by travelling up and down the railroads, and that was not all; we talked uncharitably about you and abused you and created dissatisfaction among all the women we could. We made light of what God's word says about women being in subjection to men and men being their head. We even called Paul an "old bachelor" through disrespect and went so far as that of mutilating the Bible and fixing up one that suits us. Some of us went far enough to say that God inspired our women to do as they have done. Just think how we have talked and done. It is so strange that we would assert, declare, talk and do as we have done. We have frowned, curled our lips, turned up our noses, practiced discourtesies, indulged hatred, until we are growing flinty. I feel hard and I know that I look hard. Husband, will God and you men ever forgive us? If He and you will, I shall remain where God has placed me and by His grace do all that is possible for His glory. I can see now that God did not want women as heads in prophesies, nor in the college of apostles, nor among the seventy he sent out by twos, nor the missionaries he sent abroad in New Testament days, and now shall we women ruin it all? If we

had spent the money, time and energy that we have spent on Woman Suffrage for the needs of the poor, the relief of worn-out mothers, in making homes more comfortable, better and happier, in the salvation of lost souls, and in sending the Gospel to the heathens, just think of the good we might have done and how happy and contented we would have been! God help us to stay in our proper places and do His will until we are in heaven, not entertaining for one moment the least dissatisfaction with God's order or plans. Let God's order remain unchanged. Woman's Suffrage is wrong. It is not right.

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